



# U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

Press Service



Release - Immediate

March 26, 1926.

## SUCCESSFUL TRAP DEvised FOR CAMPAIGNS AGAINST CROWS

In many places crows become so numerous that measures are necessary to reduce their numbers. Specialists of the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture for many years have observed the feeding habits of crows as they fly about the fields and have studied under the microscope the contents of thousands of their stomachs collected in all parts of the country. They find from these studies that not all the habits of the common crow are to be understood as blacker than the bird itself, for its size, virility, and almost omnivorous appetite make the crow a great influence for good at certain seasons in many localities.

Recently a highly effective trap for capturing crows was devised on the Miner Bird Refuge, in Ontario, Canada, and offered to the Biological Survey, for use in any part of the United States. For the better protection of the desirable birds coming to this sanctuary, the trap was developed, and its operation has been so successful that as many as 500 crows have been caught in it at one time. The Biological Survey recently sent F. C. Lincoln, of its scientific staff, to Ontario to note the operation and effectiveness of the trap and to report on the practicability of using duplicates of it in places where local anti-crow campaigns might be recommended by the bureau. The trap, which is about six feet high and the size of a large room, is covered with poultry wire and operated by a wire from a blind. It was found that its construction would cost the builder approximately \$100, but Mr. Lincoln reports that there are undoubtedly some localities in which its use would be profitable in the local control of crows. The Biological Survey plans to furnish blue prints of the trap for use in such places.

Where there has been an over-abundance of crows and their regular food supply has been depleted, both the common crow and its smaller brother, the fish crow, have been observed preying upon nests and eggs of various birds. Depredations of the fish crow have been especially noted at breeding colonies of herons, pelicans, terns, rails, and others in the South. In the interior and as far north as southern Canada, the larger common crow frequently turns its attention to the nests and eggs of upland game birds and waterfowl, when its regular food fails, and then it is destructive also to poultry. In some places these birds even kill larger animals that have become too weakened through injury to defend themselves against gangs of crows.

The Department of Agriculture issues the cautionary statement that, in spite of the objectionable habits of crows under certain conditions, these birds should not be persecuted in sections where they are beneficial to the farmer in preying upon the pests of his crops, and that even in areas where their injurious habits seem pronounced, preventive measures rather than destruction will often put an end to complaints against crows and still allow the birds to continue their useful work of devouring injurious insects.